1995

Relating to the Rood

Christopher C. LeCluyse
Oberlin College

Relating to the Rood

Christopher C. LeCluyse
English Honors Project

Oberlin College
April 17, 1995

Many scholars who have tried to discuss the Rood's function in the *Dream of the Rood* have placed the poem on its own sort of cross—an intersection of two axes spanning the dichotomies of Christianity and paganism, uniqueness and traditionality. The poem, as some scholars would have it, is simply a reiteration of Christian orthodoxy with a thin "heroic" gloss. Others would see it as a singular paganistic statement in an epic Germanic style with a spurious appendix added by another, more orthodox hand. These two disparate views converge on the Rood's account of the Crucifixion (ll. 33b-43), reproduced and translated below.[1]

Geseah ic þa frean mancynnes
efstan elne mycle þæt he me wolde on gestigan.
þær ic þa ne dorste ofer dryhtnes word
bugan oððe berstan, þa ic bifian geseah
eorðan sceatas. Ealle ic mihte
feondas gefyllan, hwæðre ic fæste stod.
Ongyrede hine þa geong hæleð þæt wæs god ælmihtig,
strang ond stiðmod. Gestah he on gealgan heanne,
modig on manigra gesyhðe, þa he wolde mancyn lysan.
Bifode ic þa me se beorn ymbclypte. Ne dorste ic hwæðre bugan
to eorðan,
feallan to foldan sceatum, ac ic sceolde fæste standan.

[I saw the Lord of mankind hasten with great strength because he wanted to ascend on me. I dared not then against the Lord's word bend or break when I saw the earth's surface tremble. I might have felled all the fiends, but I stood fast

The young warrior that was God Almighty stripped himself, strong and firm-spirited. He ascended the high gallows, brave in the sight of many, when he intended to redeem mankind. I trembled when the hero embraced me; yet I did not dare bend to earth, fall to the earth's surface. I had to stand fast.]

Central to one's view of the poem is how one views the Rood that recounts the Crucifixion of *þa geong hæleð þæt wæs god ælmihtig* and how one thinks the poem's original readers might

[1] Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of Old English poems are taken from John C. Pope's edition. I have taken some liberties with punctuation. All translations are my own.

have viewed it. These views reflect how one regards Anglo-Saxon culture and religion in general. Unlike the Anglo-Saxon auditor, experiencing the *Dream of the Rood* within its original cultural context, we today are greatly divorced from the society and ideas which informed the poem.[2] However, that original context can be in part reconstructed from the fragments left protruding through the poem's surface: distinct images, gestures and words which hearken back to concepts shared by the poem's unknown author and his original audience. Raised upon that reconstruction the figure of the Rood receives new light and we can appreciate the significance this important narrator might have had for the Anglo-Saxon priest, monk or nun hearing its voice.

This essay will explore the how the poem, through the Rood, might have affirmed and challenged an Anglo-Saxon auditor's religious and cultural assumptions. Both aspects of the auditor's experience could have been inspired by the Rood's dual function within the poem: as a character, the Rood responds to the Crucifixion according to Anglo-Saxon norms; as a narrator, however, the Rood recounts and refigures Christ, who challenges the same norms it is trying to uphold. This paradox and its resolution can be explained by reconstructing the ideological "space" in which the Rood's voice would have resonated. It was a space profoundly shaped by the conversion

[2] It is generally believed, based on medieval accounts, that medieval reading practice involved vocalizing or sub-vocalizing the words, making even reading alone a kind of performance to oneself. Henceforth "auditor" refers specifically to the medieval reader/listener of the poem while "reader" more generally includes anyone approaching the poem. This distinction reflects the significantly more oral nature of medieval textual perception. See O'Keefe's *Visible Song* for an insightful discussion of the textual implications of Anglo-Saxon orality and literacy.

of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity and subsequent cultural and doctrinal influences upon Anglo-Saxon religiosity, as will be discussed below. Many scholars have traced Anglo-Saxon beliefs along the dichotomized, Christian-pagan lines discussed above. However, consideration of the development of Anglo-Saxon Christianity suggests that such approaches fail to recognize that the original audience of the *Dream of the Rood* possessed a more complex sensibility, formed by a conversion process of ethical accommodation and cultural syncretism.

Placed against the historical and cultural background of the conversion, the Rood can be seen as an intermediary, negotiating for the reader tensions which arose from the synthesis of Christian ethics and indigenous Germanic values. The Rood is the nexus which connects the Dreamer to Christ but which, more importantly, mediates the Crucifixion account for the reader. This mediation is aided by the various forms of empathy which the reader feels towards the Rood. An Anglo-Saxon auditor's empathy for the Rood could have been evoked not only through the textual conventions of first-person narrative and oral poetry, but also by virtue of the Rood's suffering and its authority as a specially-commissioned servant of Christ.

What Christ demands of his servant, however, runs counter to Anglo-Saxon values. While the Rood tries to respond to Christ according to Anglo-Saxon social mores regarding how a lord should be treated, Christ counters these mores by hastening his own death and requiring his Rood-retainer to be an accomplice. Instead of accepting the Rood's culturally-conditioned gestures of fealty, Christ

bestows such gestures on the Rood itself. The vision of Christ presented by the Rood, compared with the expectations and norms of Anglo-Saxon society, was thus significantly counter-cultural for the poem's intended audience.

The Intended Audience of the *Dream of the Rood*

That the *Dream of the Rood* was created by and for the religious is evidenced by the circumstances of its creation and preservation as well as the overall nature of literacy in the early Middle Ages. The poem is found in the Vercelli Book, a collection of saint's lives and didactic texts dating from the late tenth century. The overwhelming majority of literate people in Anglo-Saxon England—indeed in all of Europe—at that time were part of the institutional church. Monasteries held the only sizable collections of books (still only large enough to fit in a cupboard) as well as the only classrooms in which to learn how to read. The only books kept privately and out of monastic hands were owned by secular clerics and by a very few kings and noblemen (Lapidge 34-35).[3] It would have been nearly impossible for lay commoners to be able to read (much less own) books, considering that it was most unlikely that those ruling over them enjoyed that privilege. In fact, education in reading and writing did not become widely accessible to the laity until centuries after the *Dream of the Rood* was written. In the early Middle Ages only the church had the technology, the resources and the need to produce a codex as elaborate as the Vercelli Book. The inclusion of homiletic fragments in the book points to a clerical readership as

[3] Lapidge comments that "there is little evidence for libraries owned by Anglo-Saxon kings" and that he knows of "no evidence for libraries owned by Anglo-Saxon noblemen" (34n-35n).

well. In keeping with this evidence, this analysis of the poem will assume a clerical, if not monastic, auditor.

Some scholars might comment that a monastic source and audience for the poem would preclude any pre-Christian ideological influences on it. However, the Anglo-Saxons were a Germanic people and continued to hold Germanic values which had been shaped in the pre-Christian past. One "Germanicized" image evident in the *Dream of the Rood* is that of a vigorous, warrior-like Christ (to be discussed below). Similar portrayals of Christ can be found in other writings by English monks such as Alcuin. John Fleming calls attention to the fact that Alcuin "speaks of the Crucifixion ... in very much the style of *The Dream of the Rood*, stressing the power and vigor of Christ on the Cross" but states that he was "not otherwise tainted by the religion of Woden" (49). Be that as it may, the fact of Alcuin's Christianity or monastic life does not necessarily eliminate the possibility of Germanic influence. Alcuin was a monk, true, but he was also an Anglo-Saxon. Like other English monks, he might have set aside worldly ways, but he certainly did not eschew his inborn world-view upon receiving the habit.

The prospect of monastic writings which exhibit Germanic cultural values becomes even more likely when one realizes that many of those who served the early medieval church were descended from the aristocracy. "To sing, or to write, of its warrior prototypes came as naturally to them as to live in the style to which, as noblemen, they were accustomed." Consequently, "aristocratic infiltration of the church meant that the idioms of heroic poetry passed into the medium of religious verse" (Wormald 10). The

Dream of the Rood is but one of many such heroic treatments in Old English of Christian subject matter. The poem's anonymous author could have written a poem deeply imbued with ideas which originated in the pre-Christian past and yet could have also expressed themes of the most Christian nature. Likewise his audience could have shared this same sensibility, bringing to the poem ideas shaped both within and without monastery walls.

The Rood as Subjective Speaker

Any reader of the poem, whether in the tenth century or the present day, would encounter the Rood as both a character within the narrative and as a speaker within the larger frame of the poem. The first image of the Rood as a character is of a surreal Tree of Glory, covered first with gold then with blood, inviting the Dreamer's awe and shame. However, when the Rood begins to speak, it changes from a silent object to a subjective speaker. The icon is now a teller of tales—a fact emphasized by its opening words, "*þæt wæs geara iu, ic þæt gyta geman*" [That was years ago—I still remember that] (l.28), which establish the Rood as an "I" and signal the beginning of a new narrative, contained within yet separate from the Dreamer's vision.

The Rood's lyric narrative is primarily distinguished by the "subjectivity of the speaker, ... the speaker's conception of her-, him- or itself as a *subject*, an I" (Bragg 23). This has epistemological consequences for the reader: the speaker's subjectivity leads the reader to posit the speaker as a "You" rather than an "It," making the lyric a "dialogue" between speaker and reader (Bragg 23). In the *Dream of the Rood*, the Dreamer is the first to speak as an "I" when

he begins to recount the "choicest of dreams that came to me at midnight" (ll.1-2). However, the Dreamer's voice fades into the background with the beginning of the Rood's narrative, his listening presence signaled only by the Rood's direct addresses to "*hæleþ min se leofa*" (ll.78, 95). Though the Rood's account is, in effect, heard over the Dreamer's shoulder, there is no impediment to the reader's establishing the Rood as a "You" and treating it as if it were directly addressing him or her.

The reader's "I-You" relationship with the Rood is an inherently empathetic one. This relationship is considerably more empathetic than if the Rood were presented in the third-person, in which case the Rood would be an "It," removed from the reader's direct experience. The "I-You" relationship becomes even more empathetic if we equate "the reader" with an Anglo-Saxon auditor, informed by the perceptual conditions of Anglo-Saxon literacy. Anglo-Saxon culture was, to use Walter Ong's term, marginally oral. Since Latin literacy had been introduced relatively recently, oral forms of text production existed alongside written ones. Those who could read and write were, perceptually speaking, "transitionally literate."[4] The Old English texts which they wrote were regarded as records of a public, spoken event, either presented to an audience or spoken aloud in the scriptorium (Bragg 26-27, 44). This notion of text as performance would have informed the production and reception of the *Dream of the Rood*. An Anglo-Saxon auditor would have understood it as a recreation of something once uttered which they themselves were

[4] Modern literacy, on the other hand, regards the written word as hypostatic — as a thing that is objectively distanced from the spoken word and can be manipulated as such.

uttering again. This would further increase his or her sense of involvement with the poem and his or her empathy for its most evocative speaker, the Rood.

The Rood's description of its origins would have been enhanced by the various levels of empathy mentioned above:

> ic wæs aheawen holtes on ende,
> astyred of stefne minum. Genaman me ðær strange feondas,
> geworhton him þær to wæfersyne, heton me herora wergas
> hebban.
> Bæron me þær beornas on eaxlum, oððæt hie me on beorg asetton,
> gefæstnodon me þær feondas genoge.
>
> [I was cut down at the edge of the forest, taken from my roots. Then strong fiends took me, made themselves a spectacle (of me), ordered me to raise up their criminals. They bore me on their shoulders until they set me on a hill; many fiends fastened me there. (ll.28-33).

The prevailing mood is that of unnatural separation and compulsion, sentiments common to Anglo-Saxon notions of exile expressed elsewhere (e.g., The *Wanderer*). Much of the description emphasizes the Rood's thingliness: it was once a tree with roots, it was carried and fastened. However, the Rood's subjectivity, coupled with the implied command issued to it by its enemies as if it could hear, blurs the lines between object and person. The reader does not regard its tribulations as those of a mere inanimate object; its removal and exploitation carry connotations of resistance and humiliation.

Some commentators deny the significance of the emotions attributed to the Rood. One such commentator is Judith Garde, who tries to counter "dangerous misrepresentations" of the Rood as an emotional speaker. Garde asserts that "readers who fail to recognize the traditional redemptive status of the Victory-tree in the opening lines are in danger of misrepresenting the Rood's various roles and

functions in the poem" (91). For her the Rood is "the most select member of those who *cwice næron* ('were without life'), unwittingly caught up in the drama and endowed with the power of speech only through the medium of the didactic dream vision." Reflecting on the Crucifixion account, she goes on to explain:

> As the tree of the Crucifixion, the Cross does not bleed, neither does it express pain and fear. It subjectively evaluates the events endured on the hill (*Bysmeredon hie unc butu ætgaddere* [They mocked us both together], 48a) in terms of the violence and derision that were directed against Christ when, as unwilling instrument it *experienced* the death of the King. The human emotions that are commonly attributed to the Rood are therefore very deceptive (107, her emphasis).

However, this explanation involves quite a bit of carpentry to get the Rood to fit into the narrow, doctrinally-supported reliquary labeled "Voiceless Creation." Garde's assertion that the Rood does not express pain, while effectively countering Rosemary Woolf's view that the Rood *shares* in Christ's suffering, is contradictory to the poem itself and restricts its imagery to the most literal level. The Rood overtly states, "*Sare ic wæs mid sorgum gedrefed*" [I was sorely troubled with sorrows] (l.59). Even in light this denotative statement, the Rood does not have to state likewise, "*Eall ic wæs mid pin gedrefed*," to give painful connotations to its impalement with nails, its *opene inwidhlemmas* [open evil-hammerings], and its wounding with shafts (ll.46-47a, 62b). The cataloging of these wounds further characterizes the Rood as an object of pity—a figure with which the reader may readily empathize.

Garde seems to imply that Anglo-Saxon piety could not tolerate the attribution of speech or feeling to an inanimate object without

the absolute knowledge that it was merely a literary conceit—perhaps it would contradict too greatly the patristic *topoi* which Old English religious poetry continually sought to emulate. Moreover, it could even supposedly mislead the believer into thinking that the True Cross regularly made speeches! However, historical and textual evidence shows that Anglo-Saxon clerics were nowhere near as simplistic as Garde seems to suggest. The Anglo-Saxons had a high tolerance for speaking, feeling objects. Many riddles contained in the Exeter Book, to which aspects of the Rood's speech have been often compared[5] deal with religious ideas and objects, many of which introduce themselves and name their own characteristics. Examples include *Riddles 46* and *57* ("chalice") and *Riddles 24* and *65* ("Bible"). There is no evidence that the writers of such riddles had to disclaim their creations to avoid sending their brethren down the wide and straight road to unorthodoxy. Like people today (perhaps even more so), Anglo-Saxon monks and nuns could appreciate irony and the uses of rhetoric. It is only reasonable to assume that the author and audience of the *Dream of the Rood* could tolerate and even identify more closely with a speaking, feeling Rood.

The Warrior Christ

The Rood suffers not only physical injury, but also emotional struggle in the face Christ's demands. Before exploring the nature of that struggle, we must consider how Christ himself was imagined by the Anglo-Saxons who wrote and read the poem. The relationship between Christ and the Rood powerfully evokes the network of

[5]Garde herself sites Michael Swanton, ed. *The Dream of the Rood* (Manchester: U.P., 1970), pp.66-67.

obligations to family and nobility which knit the daily lives of the Germanic peoples, the Anglo-Saxons included. The ties between lord and "man" and among kin made for a high level of social cohesiveness in Germanic society and proved to be a challenge to Christian missionary efforts. Though Christianity acted as a force of social cohesion in the heterogeneous and unstable society of Rome, it could not offer the same bond to those in the North. Consequently, missionaries to the Germanic peoples had to make Christianity more compatible with Germanic values to ensure its acceptance (Russell 43).

The accommodation of Christianity to Germanic society and world-view was most overtly supported by Gregory I in his policies towards the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons by the first Roman missionaries to England. In an often-quoted letter to the bishop Mellitus, on his way to England, Gregory instructed that "the temples of the idols in that country should on no account be destroyed" but rather that the idols within them should be destroyed and "the temples themselves are to be aspersed with holy water, altars set up, and relics enclosed in them." The Anglo-Saxons could even continue sacrificing animals, only now with the understanding that they were doing so in praise of the true God rather than "to the Devil" (Sherley-Price 86). The process of accommodation took place along more subtle, doctrinal lines as well:

> The Anglo-Saxon missionaries did not emphasize the central soteriological and eschatological aspects of Christianity. Instead, seeking to appeal to the Germanic regard for power, they tended to emphasize the omnipotence of the Christian God and the temporal rewards he would bestow upon those who accepted him through

> baptism and through conformity to the discipline of his Church (Russell 23)

Thus God was presented to act as an Anglo-Saxon lord—a *beahgifa* [ring-giver]—and the individual's relationship to God was part of the same network of obligations which tied him or her to kin and temporal rulers. This image of God continued to be expressed long after the conversion process, in so-called "Cædmonic" poems such as *Genesis A* and *Exodus* which, like the *Dream of the Rood*, apply Germanic values to scriptural material.[6]

The image of God which emerged from the conversion had a direct effect on how Christ was personified—namely as a powerful, strong ruler. In some cases Christ came to be the sole representation of the Deity. The Son and the Father were conflated to the extent that, among the Franks, Christ was referred to as "our God Jesus Christ" and was invoked (e.g., in the prologue to the Salic Law) with no mention of the other two persons of the Trinity. Christ was no Suffering Servant, a human counterpart to an abstract Father; rather he was represented as a victorious King of Heaven (Hillgarth 86). This is the image of Christ with which a monastic auditor of the *Dream of the Rood* would have been familiar, an image confirmed by the poem itself.

Christ in the *Dream of the Rood* is presented as above all an extremely vital figure, running up to the Rood, stripping himself and climbing up it (ll. 33b-34, 39-41). He is *strang* [strong], *stiðmod*

[6]"Cædmonic" is a label applied by John Gardner and others to early Old English poetry which exhibits a Germanizing tendency in the treatment of biblical subjects. Cædmon was, according to Bede, "so skilful ... in composing religious and devotional songs, that he could quickly turn whatever passages of scripture were explained to him into delightful and moving poetry in his own English tongue" (245).

[firm-spirited], and *modig* [brave]—quite a contrast to the Gospel accounts of the Crucifixion, in which the emphasis is placed on Christ's humiliation at the hands of the Roman soldiers and the crowd (e.g., Matthew 27:27-31, 35-44). In the Bible he is forced to carry the Cross on the way to Golgotha, stripped by the soldiers and then crucified; none of the Gospels portray Christ as hastening to his Crucifixion, nor does he possess the strong agency described in the *Dream of the Rood*. This refiguring of Christ may be attributed to the application of values appreciated by the Germanic peoples centuries before their conversion. Foremost among Germanic values—and most fundamental to the pre-Christian Germanic world-view—was the superiority of action over inaction (Bauschatz 26).

Such evidence could be construed as an argument for an essentially non-Christian Anglo-Saxon culture, one end of the traditional pagan-Christian dichotomy. However, the assumption that Germanic influence would make the poem less Christian is our own. We compare its depiction of a worldly, vigorous Christ to the more philosophically abstracted, world-rejecting Christ portrayed in the Latin and Greek world and read hints of unorthodoxy in the former. Yet this portrayal of Christ would have been supremely Christian for those who heard and read the *Dream of the Rood*. Their spirituality had developed in part from the world-view of their pagan ancestors and was on the whole much more world-accepting than Mediterranean Christianity. This again was an offshoot of the conversion process:

> Given the depth to which a worldly, heroic, magicoreligious religiosity was rooted in the world-

> accepting, folk-centered Germanic world-view, the general result of this policy of accommodation or "inculturation," whether intended or not, was the emergence of a worldly, heroic, magicoreligious, folk-centered Christianity (Russell 189).

Suffused as it was by the Germanic world-view, the church in England certainly did not consider the treatment of Christ in the *Dream of the Rood* to be unorthodox. It was after all placed among saint's lives and didactic texts. This would support the notion that the *Dream of the Rood* was to be read for its exemplary content and its support of commonly accepted belief.

Christ and the Rood's Lord-Man Relationship

Since the Anglo-Saxon concept of Christ saw him as a warrior Lord, the individual's relationship to him involved the same code of behavior which linked one to a temporal lord. In order to explain this code, past discussions of the poem have made much of the so-called *comitatus* ethic. In this they follow discussions of Germanic society in general, which have also played up the concept. For example, in discussing how Germanic social unity required Christian missionaries to adopt assimilationist tactics, John Gardner writes that Germanic society differed from that of Rome through "the particular cohesiveness engendered by the *comitatus* relationship" (119). Gardner is not alone in implying that the spirit of such a band of "companions" pervaded Germanic society and determined its ethos to the extent that it is expressed in written works. However, the *comitatus* was a social institution peculiar to the nobility; it was by no means present in all levels of Germanic society and would not necessarily have been experienced by those reading the *Dream of the*

Rood at the time of its creation. A look into the source of the concept and its manifestation in England will help illuminate the specific social niche occupied by the *comitatus*. As will be shown, the *comitatus* ethic could not have informed the depiction of the Rood's interaction with Christ as much as the more widespread "lord-man" relationship.

Evidence for the *comitatus* comes from Chapters 13 and 14 of *Germania* , written by the 2nd-century Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus. The word itself means literally "a band that goes with," translated by Old English *gesith* (Clawsey 1). According to Tacitus:

> There is a great emulation among the companions [i.e., *comitatus*], which shall possess the highest place in the favor of their chief; and among the chiefs, which shall excel in the number and valor of his companions. ... In the field of battle, it is disgraceful for the chief to be surpassed in valor; it is disgraceful for the companions not to equal their chief; but it is reproach and infamy during a whole succeeding life to retreat from the field surviving him. To aid, to protect him; to place their own gallant actions to the account of his glory, is their first and most sacred engagement. The chief fights for victory; the companions for their chief.(19-20).

This description of the *comitatus* has validated the widespread though inaccurate notion of an Anglo-Saxon England in which daily life was the stuff of *Beowulf*. It must be remembered that Tacitus' description was of continental Germanic peoples living several centuries before the period of Old English literacy. It is more prudent to accept Mary Crawford Clawsey's assertion that, while the *comitatus* "persisted among the Germanic peoples ... long after they had given up their pagan religion and in many cases their language," it was "not necessarily in the same precise form in every tribe" (24).

Textual evidence for the *comitatus* in Anglo-Saxon society is relatively limited. One of the closest approximations of it in Old English literature occurs in the *Battle of Maldon*. Ealdorman Byrhtnoth, before exchanging boasts with the Viking foe,

> ... liehte þa mid leodum þær him leofost wæs,
> þær he his heorþ-weorod holdost wisse

[alighted then amid the warriors where it pleased him most, where knew his hearth-host to be most loyal] (ll.23-24). Unfortunately the context of this passage does not suggest whether the *heorþ-weorod* was specifically Byrhtnoth's *comitatus* or if his "hearth-host" represented a larger group and the most loyal among it comprised his companions.

The *Battle of Maldon* portrays an encounter which happened in the late tenth-century, the same period which produced the Vercelli Book. Though *Maldon* was probably written some decades after the fact, its ideals of lordship and the behavior expected of retainers would have been familiar to auditors of the *Dream of the Rood*. By the late tenth century, the Anglo-Saxons were a much more settled people than the second-century Germans described by Tacitus. Instead of the primarily charismatic and even religious bond of the *comitatus*, Byrhtnoth was linked to his retainers by legal codes and the exchange of property. Suffice it to say that

> It is naive to believe that all those who followed Byrhtnoth into battle at Maldon had bowed to him and chosen his will. The poet's vision of ... an ealdorman's war band, nevertheless, does contain a kernel of truth. Because of his landed possessions and office, many ... landowners undoubtedly sought Byrhtnoth as their lord and protector (Abels 148).

By the tenth century then the *comitatus* in Tacitus' sense was largely an ideal. The exchange of goods and property, rather than a sacred pledge, constituted the bond between a lord and his retainers.

While every Anglo-Saxon lived under the sway of a lord, very few were hand-picked retainers. On the other hand most, if not all, Anglo-Saxons were part of a much more widespread social institution especially relevant to the connection of Christ to the Rood: the lord-man relationship.[7] The lord-man relationship was not the honorable military relationship of the *comitatus*, but rather "essentially a relationship between the strong and the weak" (Drew 808). In exchange for the protection of a lord, a "man" would offer tribute or, in the case of chartered land grants, military service (Abels 117). Even a "strong" lord might turn to a still stronger lord or king for military and legal protection. In turn he would offer tribute and/or military support. In this respect, the chain of lord-man relationships which constituted Anglo-Saxon society served a similar end to the network of kin bonds which likewise assured protection. As Katherine Fischer Drew describes Germanic kin groups:

> The underlying concept was the reassurance that each individual knew at all times whom he could call upon to support him in getting offenders against his peace into the courts or in providing proof or in supporting his oath in the courts, and in some cases (certainly among the Franks and Anglo-Saxons) helping him to pay compositions assessed against him (807-08).

[7] "Man" in this sense refers to one who is obliged to do a lord service and in turn receives his protection. "Thegn" is often used to mean the same thing but connotes a specifically military obligation on the part of the man. Both terms are preferrable to "vassal" because vassalage was peculiar to the feudal system, which had not yet developed in Anglo-Saxon England.

This concept was widespread enough that even the monastic audience of the *Dream of the Rood* would have lived under its sway. As early as the seventh century clerics who succeeded to land granted by King Withræd of Kent were demanded to show obedience to him in return for protection and freedom from monetary tribute (Abels 50). Far from being "outside of the world," these churchmen were liable to the same system of protection and service as the Anglo-Saxon laity.

The Anglo-Saxon lord had more to offer his men than protection however. Anglo-Saxon rulers were also expected to be munificent. The gifts bestowed by a lord to his man served as "the material reminder of the retainer's reciprocal obligation when war service or vengeance [was] required" (O'Keefe 108). The giving of gifts functioned on a much greater social level as well. The gift not only served as a reminder, but also "created, symbolized, and confirmed the relationship between a man and his lord." Thus gift-giving maintained the chain of command which was at the heart of Anglo-Saxon society (Abels 30).

In light of the conditions of the lord-man relationship discussed above, the Rood's desire to fell Christ's enemies is not simply a matter of eagerness or personal concern; it is the wish to fulfill its end of the lord-man bargain. The original audience of the poem would have been aware of the necessity to protect the munificent Lord not only out of honor for the Divine, but also out of a necessity mandated by the fabric of their society. And yet the Rood cannot carry out what is expected of it because of the overriding necessity that the Crucifixion be allowed to happen. Here a cultural authority

supported by centuries of social and legal precedent must bow to the authority of the Bible and of Christian doctrine. Considering the ubiquity of the obligations being transgressed in the Crucifixion narrative, the Rood's standing still could have been a source of considerable tension in the mind of an Anglo-Saxon auditor. However, the Rood does not do so out of disobedience but rather demonstrates an obedience to its Lord which goes beyond social expectations. The power of lordship and its exactation of service is upheld, but a new mode of behavior is being mandated, one requiring will-conquering restraint and sacrifice.

The societal forces at work (and at war) in the relationship of Christ and the Rood would have been quite relevant to a monastic auditor of the *Dream of the Rood*. Though such forces may have originated outside the cloister, the poem is also filled with doctrinal ideas which would have circulated within monastery walls. Consideration of these ideas will complement the values and mores discussed so far and further flesh out our concept of the religious sensibilities of the intended audience of the *Dream of the Rood*. Rather than an invocation of Anglo-Saxon lordship, the image of a warrior Christ can be read as a representation of *Christus Victor*, the triumphant Christ associated with the so-called "dualistic" idea of the Atonement developed in the early Church. According to Gustaf Aulén:

> This type of view may be described provisionally as the 'dramatic.' Its central theme is the idea of the Atonement as a Divine conflict and victory; Christ—Christus Victor—fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world .... and in Him God reconciles the world to Himself (20).

The dualism involved in the idea is the radical separation between the will of God and creation. However, the two are reconciled through Christ's triumph. Thus Atonement is achieved "because the drama is a cosmic drama, and the victory over the hostile powers brings to pass a new relation ... between God and the world" (Aulén 21).

The expression of the dualistic idea of the Atonement in the *Dream of the Rood* has been used by various critics to confirm their theses of Anglo-Saxon religiosity. Rosemary Woolf sees *Christus Victor* embodied in the image of the warrior Christ. However, she also considers the *Dream of the Rood* to express the "satisfaction" theory of redemption, which saw Christ's death as a sacrifice to God, made by Christ on humanity's behalf. Depictions of the Crucifixion informed by the satisfaction theory, among which she places the *Dream of the Rood*, emphasize Christ's abasement and suffering (Woolf 36). Woolf presents the poem as narrowly negotiating the extremes of Nestorianism (Christ as purely human) and Monophysitism (Christ as purely divine). While successfully negotiating this obstacle course, the poem inadvertently swings towards Gnosticism by implying that Christ's suffering, and thus his consciousness, was wholly comprehensible (48). Gnosticism is avoided only by "the semi-identification of the Cross with Christ," by which "the poet enables his hearers to share in an imaginative recreation of Christ's sufferings, whilst the problem ... [of] the nature of Christ's consciousness ... is avoided" (48). However, this "Gnostic" focus on Christ's sufferings was not necessarily unorthodox for the

Anglo-Saxons (Fleming 51). Like the image of God as a warrior king, it was for them "good" Christianity.

A doctrinal reading of the *Dream of the Rood* which ignores the satisfaction theory altogether is that of Judith N. Garde, who maintains that the poem reiterates "an orthodox Christology" which includes "a traditional perception of *Christus Victor*," free from any representation of Christ which would contradict "the thesis of divine supremacy" (96). She chastises Woolf for choosing "to understand paradox, heretical debate and authorial circumspection." If either of these critics are to be faulted, it is because they have placed themselves along the original-vs.-traditional crossbar: Woolf marvels at the poet's "brilliant invention ... in his emphasis on Christ's human nature" (29) while Garde sees the poem as "a sequence of redemptive events of which the implications are entirely predictable" (92). However, as suggested above, the image of a triumphant yet suffering Christ could have been orthodox for the Anglo-Saxon auditor. The poem can be creative and evocative and still contain traditional elements. In answer to Garde: though the poem's depiction of Christ could have recalled "traditional perceptions," derived from the patristic concept of *Christus Victor*, it could have simultaneously suggested the Germanic warrior ideal valued highly in Anglo-Saxon society.

Though the depiction of a warrior Christ may be similar conceptually to the image of *Christus Victor*, an analog does not a source make. The dualistic theory of the Atonement is, to use Aulén's words again, a cosmic drama. Its victorious Christ is a cosmic Christ, accomplishing salvation on a universal level. Though the

dualistic theory centers around the Crucifixion, it is much more concerned with abstract doctrinal questions. Since the Crucifixion is a given and does not need to be reworked, the theological implications and the consequences of the Crucifixion are primarily at stake. The *Dream of the Rood*, on the other hand, retells and elaborates the Crucifixion event, most notably through its refiguring of Christ. The poem does contain a further explanation of the doctrinal implications of Christ's death, but such reflections come after (and can be read in terms of) the significantly altered Crucifixion. While *Christus Victor* is a concept of the cosmic Christ and the workings of redemption, the *Dream of the Rood* offers a particular depiction of the earthly Jesus.

It cannot be denied that the image of a warrior Christ was not unique to the Germanic peoples. The Mediterranean world had its *Christus Miles*, which Woolf regards as

> a common imaginative theme of the early church, which must have been known to the Anglo-Saxons, and which represents such striking affinities to both conception and tone of the *geong hæleð* ... in the *Dream of the Rood*, that it would be perverse to prefer the theory of coincidence to that of influence (39).

Be that as it may, there is certainly a qualitative difference between representing Christ as a Roman soldier and representing him as an Anglo-Saxon lord. Both images carry associations peculiar to their respective social contexts and dependent on two radically different political systems. The Roman soldier did not enjoy the reciprocity of the Anglo-Saxon lord-man relationship (Clawsey 32). In matters of strategy, he was but one unit in a larger functional group. The ideals of

Anglo-Saxon warfare on the other hand focused on the importance of individual acts of valor. At the risk of sounding "perverse" by Woolf's standards, the Anglo-Saxon auditor's own cultural milieu would have been much more relevant and immediate to his or her understanding of the poem, in spite of the Latin culture importation fostered by the church. It is therefore highly unlikely that he or she would have envisioned Christ as a Roman soldier. While the image of Christ in the poem may have been influenced by *Christus Miles*, it was expressed in distinctly Anglo-Saxon terms and was most likely read along the same lines.

The Rood as Retainer

The same cultural values which refigure Christ also reflect on the Rood. An activeness similar to Christ's vitality is present in the Rood's response to the situation threatening its Lord. Though some commentators choose to see the Rood as helpless, unwilling and unable to act (e.g., Garde 107, Raw 241), the language it uses to describe its predicament suggests something quite different. Important examples are the Rood's admissions that "*ic þa ne dorste ofer Dryhtnes word bugan oððe berstan*" (l. 36) and "*ne dorste ic hwæðre bugan to eorðan*" (l.42). These statements can be read several different ways, each reading dependent on whether one takes *bugan* to mean either "bow, bend" or "submit." If *bugan* is read to mean "bow, bend" in the most literal sense, the wooden Rood could be resisting bending from structural weakness, standing erect in spite of the trembling of the earth's surface and the Rood's own

trembling when "the Man" embraced it (l.42a). Interpreting *bugan* in this way could indeed encourage an image of the Rood as helpless, continually on the verge of falling apart.

A more active image of the Rood emerges if the bow which it dares not perform is considered a voluntary act. In that case, the Rood could be countering the desire to respond to its Lord in the same way that Anglo-Saxon retainers were expected to respond to theirs. According to Germanic custom, obedience was shown to one's lord by kneeling and folding the hands (Russell 42). Kneeling and bowing were combined with other gestures to show respect and affection for one's lord, as this passage from the *Wanderer* (dreamt by a warrior now in exile) illustrates:

> þynceþ him on mode þæt he his mann-dryhten
> clyppe and cysse and on cneo lecge
> handa and heafod, swa he hwilum ar
> on gear-dagum gief-stoles breac.
>
> [It seems to him in spirit that he may embrace and kiss his man-lord and lay hand and head on (his lord's) knee, as he sometimes before in days of yore enjoyed the gift-seat] (ll. 41-44).

To meet Christ's ends, however, the Cross must remain standing, in the process enduring a reversal of roles. As John Gardner explains, "the failure to bow is, in Germanic terms, an act of greatest restraint" (140). To complicate matters even further, it is now the lord who embraces his servant, not the expected reverse. The tension which could have arisen from this inversion of gestures parallels that coming from the Rood's refusal to defend its Lord. In both cases, concepts and conventions deeply valued in Anglo-Saxon society have been turned topsy-turvy by the Christian demand for humility and

self-sacrifice. However, the following alternative reading reaffirms the values of the lord-man relationship.

A still more active sense of *bugan* in the Rood's account stems from taking the word to mean "submit." For example in *Beowulf*, Wiglaf reproaches the dead Beowulf's cowardly retainers by recounting how their king Hygelac was overwhelmed by the Hetware "*þæt se byrnwiga bugan sceolde, feoll on feðan*" [so that the mail-warrior had to submit, fall amid the foot-soldiers] (ll. 2918-2919a).[8] Likewise, in the same narrative section, Wulf is struck by Ongentheow "*þæt he blode fah bugan sceolde, feoll on foldan*" [so that he had to submit, stained with blood, he fell to the ground] (ll. 2974-2975a). In the first instance *bugan* is an understatement, since Hygelac submits not only to the Hetware, but to death. The passage containing the second example depicts Wiglaf falling to the ground, but regaining his senses soon afterwards: *bugan* here refers to a momentary submission. *Bugan* in the Rood's account could carry the same connotations as these violent renditions. Such a reading is encouraged by the similarity between ll. 42b-43a of the *Dream of the Rood* and the two *Beowulf* examples. The formula "*(he) bugan sceolde, feoll on*" followed by a word alliterating with *feoll* nearly echoes the Rood's "*bugan to eorðan, feallan to foldan sceatum.*" Taken this way, the Rood's not daring to submit in the face of turmoil (as the warriors in *Beowulf* were forced to do) recalls the courage and support expected of a "man" serving his lord. Christ's Crucifixion is a *miclan gewinne* [great battle] for the Rood as well. Reading *bugan* to mean "submit" amplifies the Rood's view of the event as

[8] Quotations from *Beowulf* are from the Dobbie edition.

inherently agonistic: "*Fela ic on þam beorge gebiden hæbbe wraðra wyrda*" [I have endured many cruel fates on the hill] (ll.50-51a). The Crucifixion is but one instance of struggle faced by the Rood. Other notable examples are its removal from the forest (discussed below) and its fall and burial (ll.73b-75), all the result of *bealu-wara weorc* [deadly men's work] which it has endured (ll.79-80). A life of struggle is a life of action; a character enduring such struggle would have affirmed the Anglo-Saxon ideal and positively exemplified Anglo-Saxon values.

A New Behavioral Paradigm

The Rood's subjectivity, sufferings, and affirmation of Anglo-Saxon values all make for a speaker with which an Anglo-Saxon auditor could readily identify. This enables the Rood to act as a mediator, sharing the cultural assumptions of the Anglo-Saxon reader but also obeying Christ's demands. John Fleming has commented that

> The thematic intimacy between Christ and His Cross in the *Dream of the Rood* is not the poet's means of narrowing the theological focus of the Crucifixion episode to preclude Christological difficulties, but rather his method of widening that scope to bridge the gap between Christ and the Dreamer. The Cross becomes a kind of mediator, in the first instance, between the Dreamer and his Lord.... In the *Dream of the Rood* the Cross becomes the common denominator between Christ and the Dreamer, the essential experience which they share... (53).

However, the Rood becomes the common denominator between Christ and the reader as well. As mentioned before, the Dreamer fades from the narrative picture once the Rood begins its account,

making the Rood's narrative in effect a direct address to the reader. Yet even when the Dreamer is present, he too "reads" the Rood's account and responds in an ideal fashion by praying to the Rood with newfound strength and hoping for his own eventual salvation (ll.122-144a). His experience of the Rood is shared with Christ in the most literal sense—both are physically (or metaphysically) present with it. While both Christ and the Dreamer have the Rood in common, both the auditor and the Rood would have shared Anglo-Saxon cultural expectations. On this common ground the Rood would become a means of approaching the other-worldly Christ, who in spite of his cultural re-casting was still too supremely divine for the auditor to approach directly. By emulating the Dreamer, the reader would be encouraged to likewise enter the Rood's service and link him- or herself to Christ through the lord-man relationship: the auditor, like the Dreamer, could make himself a "man" to the lordly Cross, who in turn served as "man" to Christ, the Lord of all.

The chain of command linking Christ to the Rood and the Rood to the Dreamer/auditor is established within the text by the Rood's commissioning of the Dreamer:

> Is nu sæl cumen
> þæt me weorðiaþ wide and side
> menn ofer moldan and eall þeos mære gesceaft,
> gebiddaþ him to þissum beacne....
> Hwæt, me þa geweorðode wuldres Ealdor
> ofer holt-wudu, heofon-rices Weard,
> swelce swa he his modor eac, Marian selfe,
> ælmihtig God, for ealle menn
> geweorðode ofer eall wifa cynn.
>
> [The time has now come that I be honored far and wide by men all over the earth and all this great creation. Bid them come to this sign. Lo! the Lord of Glory, heaven-kingdom's guardian, honored me above all other forest-trees just as he,

> Almighty God, before all men honored his mother, Mary herself, above all womankind,] (ll.80b-83a, 90-94).

Each link in the chain involves showing honor. It is even implied that the *Dream of the Rood* itself is itself the Dreamer's fitting means of honoring the Rood, who fittingly honored and was honored by Christ. The Dreamer's honoring of the Rood takes on the full trappings of the lord-man relationship with his confident claim, "*min mund-byrd is geriht to þære rode*" (ll.130b-131a). *Mund-byrd*, literally "hand-" or "protection-birth," is the legal obligation of a lord to protect his subjects (Pope 184). The Dreamer asserts that his "hope of protection is directed toward the Rood;" he is in the Rood's service and therefore seeks the protection due him as the Rood's "man." The auditor, encouraged by the Dreamer's beatific vision of the afterlife,

> hwonne me Dryhtnes rod
> þe ic her on eorðan ær sceawode,
> on þissum lænan life gefecce.

[when the Lord's rood, which I here on earth already beheld, may fetch me from this fleeting life] (ll.136b-138), would do well to hope likewise in the Rood's protection. Consequently the Rood's role as mediator is strengthened by its role as lordly protector and object of honor.

Seen through the lens of Anglo-Saxon values, Christ's crucifixion as it is described in the Bible is decidedly anti-heroic. However, through the refiguring of Christ and the Rood's mediation, the *Dream of the Rood* would have raised Christ's behavior to heroism for the Anglo-Saxon auditor. Christ's self-sacrifice would be made allowable by virtue of his lordly authority, which supersedes all.

The proper response to the mystery of the Lord's self-sacrifice is offered by the Rood when delivering over Christ's body: *hnag ic hwæðre þam secgum to handa eaþ-mod, elne micle* [however I bent to the hands of (the) warriors, gentle-spirited, with great strength] (ll.59b-60a). Some translators may chose to read *elne micle* as a simple intensifier, "very much," making this phrase read "very gentle-spirited." However, *elne* itself means "strength"—*elne micle* can therefore be read as an instrumental modifier of *ic* with the sense "with much strength." If read in this way, the Rood's strength is coupled with its humility in giving up Christ's body. A seeming antithesis arises as the humility prized in Christian ethics is coupled with the strength valued among the Germanic peoples. Yet the Rood's own authority as Christ's retainer, coupled with its multiple claims for the auditor's empathy, make this combination of values possible. The Rood has made this syncretic behavioral paradigm not only acceptable, but desirable and even necessary for individual salvation.

This combination of humility and strength affects how one may regard the honor merited by the individual serving Christ. Another juxtaposition of Germanic and Christian values takes place. Whereas the Germanic peoples regarded personal honor as derived from "external approval which one usually merited by courageous acts performed on behalf of one's kin or one's lord," the Christian notion of honor was internally focused, "a moral quality stemming primarily from a desire to avoid feelings of guilt and the fear of punishment associated with sinfulness" (Russell 120). In the *Dream of the Rood*, both notions of honor exist simultaneously in the Rood's response to

Christ. The Rood proves itself by enduring struggle yet also humbles itself to Christ's greater will. The Dreamer's response to the Rood is likewise a juxtaposition of Germanic and Christian concepts of honor. As the Dreamer proclaims,

> Is me nu lifes hyht
> þæt ic þone sige-beam secan mote,
> ana oftor þonne ealle menn
> wel weorðian.

[It is now life's joy for me that I may seek the Victory-Tree, alone among all men well honored] (ll.126b-129a). The Dreamer is honored both externally and internally, raised above all others, brave like Christ in the sight of many, yet meritorious for his solitude and self-denial.

Through the juxtaposition of Christian and Germanic notions of ideal behavior and honor in the *Dream of the Rood*, the soteriology left unemphasized by the Roman mission to the Anglo-Saxons is emphasized and made more comprehensible to the auditor. Suffering is transformed into a heroic struggle in keeping with Germanic values. However, the result of the poem's coming to terms with Christian self-sacrifice through the application of Germanic values is, paradoxically, the ultimate supplantation of Germanic values by Christian ethics. A historical example of this process in action comes from the Venerable Bede's *Vita Beatorum Abbatum*. In recounting the life of Benedict Biscop, Bede relates that

> When [Benedict Biscop] was a thegn of King Oswiu and received, by his gift, a grant of land corresponding to his rank, being about 25 years old, he despised that transitory possession so as to acquire eternal good. He disdained earthly service, with its corruptible reward, that, serving the True King, he might deserve to enjoy an eternal kingdom in the heavenly city (Hillgarth 153).

The gift-centered hierarchical system is still retained, however much the rejection of worldly goods seems to run counter to the lordly bestowal of gifts. Rather than being a "man" to King Oswiu and accepting his gift of land, Benedict becomes a thegn to the True King, who in turn grants him the gift of an eternal kingdom on high. So too the Rood chooses the honor granted him by Christ over that which could have come from felling his Lord's enemies (ll37b-38). So too the Dreamer accepts the Rood's *mundbyrd* rather than seek assurance from powerful friends on earth (ll.131b-133). In both the poem and Bede's history, a fundamentally Germanic social structure is applied to Christian belief with the end result of maintaining the former while advancing the latter.

The *Dream of the Rood* was the product of centuries of cultural syncretism resulting from a conversion process which itself was fundamentally syncretic. However, the poem was also an answer to the conversion process; it made a place for suffering and self-sacrifice in a social system that often emphasized heroic struggle and triumph over enemies. For the original auditors of the *Dream of the Rood*, aided by the Rood's mediation, Anglo-Saxon society and the Christian ethos would be simultaneously upheld. They as individuals could have found a place in the *schema* established by the poem by joining the Dreamer as servants of the Rood, enjoying its protection and that of its own master, Christ. Overall the poem would have enabled them not only to come to terms with the Christian message, but also to hear it uttered again in their own language.

Works Consulted

Abels, Richard P. *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1988.

Anderson, James E. *Two Literary Riddles in the Exeter Book*. Norman, Okla.: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1986.

Aulén, Gustaf. *Christus Victor*. New York: MacMillan Press, 1951.

Bauschatz, Paul C. *The Well and the Tree*. Amherst, Mass.: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1982.

Bragg, Lois. *The Lyric Speakers of Old English Poetry*. London: Associated Univ. Presses, 1991.

Clawsey, Mary Crawford. *The Comitatus and the Lord-Vassal Relationship in the Medieval Epic*, Ph.D. dissertation. Baltimore: Univ. of Maryland, 1982.

Dobbie, Elliot Van Kirk ed. *Beowulf and Judith*. The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records 4. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1953.

Drew, Katherine Fischer. "Another Look at the Origins of the Middle Ages: A Reassessment of the Role of the Germanic Kingdoms." *Speculum* 62 (1987): 803-812.

Fleming, John V. "The Dream of the Rood and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism." *Traditio* 22 (1966): 43-72.

Frank, Roberta "Germanic Legend in Old English" in Godden Malcolm and Michael Lapidge, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), 88-106.

Garde, Judith N. *Old English Poetry in Medieval Christian Perspective*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1991.

Gardner, John. *The Construction of Christian Poetry in Old English.* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975.

Gatch, Milton McC. *Loyalties and Traditions: Man and His World in Old English Literature.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1971.

The Germany and the Agricola of Tacitus. Oxford Translation, revised. New York: Arthur Hinds and Co., ca. 1900.

Hillgarth, J. N. *Christianity and Paganism, 350-750: The Conversion of Western Europe.* Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1986.

Holmes, Urban T. *A History of Christian Spirituality: An Analytical Introduction.* New York: Seabury Press, 1980.

Irving, Edward B., Jr. "Crucifixion Witnessed, or Dramatic Interaction in The Dream of the Rood" in Phyllis Rugg Brown et al., eds. *Modes of Interpretation in Old English Literature* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1986), 101-113.

Lapidge, Michael and Helmut Gneuss, eds. *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England.* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985.

Lee, Alvin A. *The Guest-Hall of Eden.* New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1972.

O'Keefe, Katherine O'Brien. "Heroic Values and Christian Ethics" in Malcolm and Lapidge, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, 107-125.

_____. *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse.* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990.

Polomé, Edgar C. *Essays on Germanic Religion.* Journal of Indo-European Studies, Monograph Series, no. 6. Washington D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man, 1989.

Pope, John C. *Seven Old English Poems*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966.

Raw, Barbara C. "Biblical Literature: The New Testament" in Malcolm and Lapidge, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, 227-242.

Russell, James C. *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994.

Sherley-Price, Leo, trans. *Bede: A History of the English Church and People*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1955.

Wallace-Hadrill, J. M. *Early Medieval History*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975.

Woolf, Rosemary. "Doctrinal Influences on The Dream of the Rood." *Medium Aevum* (1958): 137-53; reprint ed., *Art and Doctrine*, Heather O'Donoghue, ed. (London: The Hambledon Press, 1986), 29-48.

Wormald, Patrick. "Anglo-Saxon Society and Literature" in Malcolm and Lapidge, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, 1-22.